

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows.

1-6 (Cancelled)

7. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method for providing metered capacity of at least one hardware resource on demand, the method comprising the steps of:

determining when a first selected hardware resource is required;

when the first selected hardware resource is required, determining whether unused billed capacity ~~for assigned to a second hardware resource of the same type of hardware resource~~ as the first selected hardware resource is available; and

~~if when~~ unused billed capacity ~~for assigned to the same type of second~~ hardware resource is available, assigning the unused billed capacity ~~of assigned to the same type of second~~ hardware resource to the first selected hardware resource.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 7 further comprising the step of billing a predetermined resource-time for the first selected hardware resource if no unused paid capacity ~~for assigned to the same type of second~~ hardware resource is available.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8 further comprising the step of deducting the billed predetermined resource-time from a prepaid amount.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 7 further comprising the step of determining whether the first selected hardware resource has already been billed.

11. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method for providing metered capacity of at least one hardware resource on demand, the method comprising the steps of:

- determining when ~~the a~~ first selected hardware resource is required;
- determining whether the first selected hardware resource has already been billed;
- ~~if when~~ the first selected hardware resource has not already been billed,
- determining whether unused billed capacity ~~for~~ assigned to a second hardware resource of the same type of hardware resource as the first selected hardware resource is available;
- ~~if when~~ unused billed capacity ~~for assigned to the same type of second~~ hardware resource is available, assigning the unused billed capacity ~~of assigned to the same type of second~~ hardware resource to the first selected hardware resource; and
- ~~if when~~ unused billed capacity ~~for assigned to the same type of second~~ hardware resource is not available, billing a predetermined resource-time for the first selected hardware resource.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11 further comprising the step of deducting the billed predetermined resource-time from a prepaid amount.

13-22 (Cancelled)

Please add the following new claim.

23. (New) A computer-implemented method for providing metered capacity of a plurality of processors on demand in a computer system, the method comprising the steps of:

(A) determining total processor usage of the plurality of processors in the computer system across a plurality of logical partitions;

(B) determining base processor usage of the plurality of processors in the computer system across the plurality of logical partitions;

(C) when the total processor usage determined in step (A) exceeds the base processor usage determined in step (B), performing the steps of:

 expiring all timed-out usage windows for all of the plurality of processors;

 selecting one of the plurality of processors;

 when the selected processor is unbilled, determining whether there is unused billed capacity assigned to one of the other of the plurality of processors;

 when there is unused billed capacity assigned to one of the other of the plurality of processors, assigning the unused billed capacity assigned to the one of the other of the plurality of processors to the selected processor; and

 when there is no unbilled capacity assigned to any of the other of the plurality of processors, billing a predetermined resource-time for the selected processor.